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Denison's Specialties

FOR THE SAKE
OF PEGGY

By

Ragna B. Eskil

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Publishers · Chicago



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T. S. DENISON & COMPANY, Publishers, 154 W. Randolph St., Chicago

FOR THE SAKE *of* PEGGY

A CHILD WELFARE PLAY

IN ONE ACT

BY

RAGNA B. ESKIL

AUTHOR OF

*"Aunt Harriet's Night Out," "America in the Making," "Betty's
and Bobby's Christmas," "Lottie Sees It Through,"
"Who's the Boss?" Etc.*



CHICAGO

T. S. DENISON & COMPANY

PUBLISHERS

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FOR THE SAKE OF PEGGY

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CHARACTERS.

MRS. THOMPSON.....*The Social Leader of Clinton*
MRS. LENNOX...*Chairman of the Child Welfare Committee*
MRS. BLACK....*A Newcomer, Interested in Child Welfare*
MRS. CASEY....*Who Always Agrees with Mrs. Thompson*
MRS. STRATHMORE...*A Wealthy Friend of Mrs. Thompson*
MARY*Her Daughter*
PEGGY*Mrs. Thompson's Daughter*
ANNIE*The Thompsons' Maid*
MRS. STANIKA.....*One of the Mill Women*
JOSEPH*Her Son*
MISS SIMS*A Trained Nurse*
MISS BROWN*A Teacher*
*Ten to Twenty Children (or more) between the ages of
four to six years.*

— PLACE—*The Living Room of the Thompson Home.*

— TIME—*The Present. Any Afternoon in the School Year.*

— TIME OF PLAYING—*About Forty-five Minutes.*

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COSTUMES AND CHARACTERISTICS.

MRS. THOMPSON—A woman of about thirty-five. She is one of those charming, gracious women who are very set in their notions against a thing, but whose influence is worth winning. She wears a pretty afternoon dress.

MRS. LENNOX—An efficient, kindly woman, older than Mrs. Thompson. She wears a well-tailored suit.

MRS. BLACK—A young newcomer in town. She wears a pretty street dress.

MRS. CASEY—Fat and jolly and with a habit of agreeing with the most influential person present. She is rather dowdy in her dress.

MRS. STRATHMORE—A strikingly pretty young woman, very richly dressed. She carries a handbag with the chart in it.

MARY—A rosy-cheeked, healthy girl of about six. She is dressed in a plain, well-made serge or linen dress and a simple hat.

PEGGY—A delicate girl of about five. She is dressed in white and has a white wool shawl about her shoulders.

ANNIE—She wears the regulation maid's black dress and white apron.

MRS. STANIKA—She is not dowdy, but is dressed to look "foreign." She wears a shawl instead of a hat on her head.

JOSEPH—A frail looking boy of five or six. His mother is proud of his "American" clothes and he looks quite dressed up.

MISS SIMS—Regulation nurse's costume.

MISS BROWN—Wears a school dress and hat.

The children, both boys and girls, should be dressed in every-day school clothes. If the play is supposed to take place in the winter time, then, if the stage is large enough, they may come in with their hats and coats, and remove them immediately on entering.

SPECIAL PROPERTIES

An easy chair ; a Child Welfare chart with stars on it for Mary ; smaller charts for the school children, including two extra ones for Peggy and Joseph.

This may be the closing feature of a child welfare contest, if desired. As an advertisement for the contest, it might be announced that the twenty children (or more, if the stage is large enough to accommodate them) between the ages of four and six, who pass the highest Child Welfare tests of height and weight and general health, will be allowed to take part in the play, and the girl who has the highest number of points will take the part of Mary. Enough time of course should elapse between the ending of the contest and the performance of the play to allow for drilling the children.

The dialogue of the children on pages 19-20 can be changed to suit the local needs.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R. means right of stage ; *C.*, center ; *R. C.*, right center ; *L.*, left ; up stage, away from footlights ; down stage, near footlights. The actor is supposed to be facing the audience.

FOR THE SAKE OF PEGGY

SCENE: *The living room of the Thompson home. This is a well-furnished room of good taste and charm. It is very comfortable and there are several vases of flowers. A large easy chair is at the lower right and there are at least six other chairs. The door to the front hall is at the left and the door to the dining room is at the right.*

The curtain rises on an empty stage. The door bell rings at the left. ANNIE enters from the right, crosses the stage and returns ushering in MRS. LENNOX and MRS. BLACK. MRS. LENNOX is an austere but kind-hearted woman of about forty. She is a frequent visitor at the Thompson home, and ANNIE, who is of the better class of maid, admires her greatly. MRS. BLACK is a newcomer in the town. She is an up-to-date woman of perhaps thirty-five.

ANNIE. Won't you take seats? (MRS. LENNOX and MRS. BLACK take seats near the front.) I'll call Mrs. Thompson right away. She's upstairs with Peggy.

MRS. LENNOX. Peggy's not sick again?

ANNIE. Just one of her spells.

MRS. LENNOX (*half rising*). Oh, then, we won't stay, Annie. Tell Mrs. Thompson we'll come again.

ANNIE. Oh, it isn't anything serious. Peggy's dressed and sitting up and the nurse is with her. Mrs. Thompson won't like it if I don't call her.

MRS. LENNOX (*settling back in her chair*). Well, tell Mrs. Thompson I've brought Mrs. Black, who has just moved here from Coleman, with me, and that we want to see her about the Child Welfare Station. Tell her we won't keep her long.

ANNIE. Yes, ma'am. (*She starts toward the door at the left and then turns abruptly with her hands clasped imploringly.*) Oh, Mrs. Lennox, you'll get her to help with the Child Welfare, won't you?

MRS. LENNOX. Why, Annie, what does it mean to you?

ANNIE. Oh, I know I shouldn't talk, but it's for the women at the mill. Mrs. Thompson won't let them bring their children to the Child Welfare examinations at the school. And, believe me, those women need to learn how to take care of their kids.

MRS. LENNOX (*half to herself*). So that's why we don't get any response from the mill women.

ANNIE. Yes, ma'am, that's why. Mrs. Thompson says if the women bring their children to the Child Welfare, then it looks as if the mill ain't taking the proper interest in them.

MRS. LENNOX. But that isn't right. Child Welfare is for every one—rich and poor alike.

ANNIE. Yes, I know, but that's what Mrs. Thompson don't understand. She thinks it's *charity*. Oh, I know I shouldn't be talking this way, but just yesterday there was a mill woman come here with her little boy, and he was awfully pale and weak looking. I shouldn't have let her in, but I did, and she wanted to take the little boy to the Child Welfare, but Mrs. Thompson said she shouldn't. Mrs. Thompson's awfully sweet, but I wish you could make her see this thing right. But I mustn't stand here talking. (*She hastily goes out.*)

MRS. BLACK (*looking about the room*). I don't see how anyone so monstrous can live in such a charming place.

MRS. LENNOX. Oh, you have the wrong idea entirely. Mrs. Thompson isn't monstrous. On the contrary, she is one of the sweetest, most charming women you ever met. Only, like some sweet and charming women, she is very set in her ideas, and she has quite taken it into her head, as Annie said, that Child Welfare is a charity affair, and hence rich people have nothing to do with it, and as for the mill people—well, Mr. Thompson, as you doubtless have heard, has instituted admirable working conditions, and she holds that a Child Welfare Station here would seem to indicate that the workers needed outside help. So she's opposed, and so long as she stands against it we won't get far, while

if we win her over, she'll make the station a big success from the start.

MRS. BLACK. Has she only this one child?

MRS. LENNOX. Yes, Peggy's the only child and they both think the world of her.

MRS. BLACK. Is she an invalid?

MRS. LENNOX. Oh, no, she's merely delicate. To tell you the truth, I think if Peggy were not pampered so much, she would be better. But they have a trained nurse for her all the time, and—

MRS. BLACK (*whose seat faces the left door*). Sh—someone's coming.

MRS. THOMPSON *enters*. *She is very charming and gracious in manner. Both MRS. LENNOX and MRS. BLACK rise.*

MRS. THOMPSON (*holding out her hand to MRS. LENNOX*). Oh, this is delightful of you to come.

MRS. LENNOX. Mrs. Thompson, this is Mrs. Black. The Blacks have just moved here from Coleman. Mrs. Black was interested in Child Welfare work there, and—

MRS. THOMPSON (*shaking hands with MRS. BLACK*). Well, even if you *are* interested in Child Welfare, I am glad to know you, Mrs. Black. With my little girl so delicate as she is, and with my work among the people at the mill, I don't get around to calling on all the charming people who come to town. But won't you be seated? (*MRS. LENNOX and MRS. BLACK take their chairs again and MRS. THOMPSON seats herself near them.*) Oh, dear, I know by the way Mrs. Lennox is acting that she is the chairman of some committee or something, and that she has designs on me.

MRS. LENNOX (*smiling*). I have; but first how is Peggy today?

MRS. THOMPSON (*her face clouding*). I don't know. Dr. Merritt can't find anything organically wrong with her, but she's so weak and listless all the time that it makes me quite worried. I—

ANNIE *comes in from the left, followed closely by MRS. CASEY*. MRS. CASEY *speaks with a brogue*.

ANNIE. Mrs. Casey, ma'am. (*She goes out.*)

MRS. CASEY. It's just me, Mrs. Thompson. (MRS. THOMPSON *rises.*) How do, Mrs. Lennox. (*She looks inquiringly at MRS. BLACK.*)

MRS. THOMPSON. This is Mrs. Black, Mrs. Casey. (MRS. BLACK *acknowledges the greeting.*)

MRS. CASEY (*shaking hands*). I'm pleased to meet you, Mrs. Black. You live down in the second house from the corner with the green shutters on F Street, don't you? And your husband's the new man at the bank, ain't he? Well, I hope you like our city. (*To MRS. THOMPSON, in a mournful tone.*) How is your little Peggy today, Mrs. Thompson? That's what I come to inquire about. I say it ain't no more than neighborly to ask how your neighbors be when they're ailing.

MRS. THOMPSON. Thank you, Mrs. Casey, for your kindness. Peggy isn't very well, I'm sorry to say.

MRS. CASEY (*shaking her head*). The poor child! I do hope you'll be able to raise her.

MRS. THOMPSON. Why, Mrs. Casey!

MRS. CASEY. Well, I was just saying to Mrs. Murphy the other day when Peggy was out for a drive with her nurse, that she was so weak and white looking, wouldn't it be too bad if the Thompsons with all their money couldn't raise her.

MRS. THOMPSON. Oh, Mrs. Casey!

MRS. LENNOX. What nonsense, Mrs. Casey. Peggy is delicate, but there's nothing so alarming about her condition.

MRS. CASEY (*heaving a sigh and seating herself without being asked. MRS. THOMPSON resumes her seat.*) Oh, I hope you're right, Mrs. Lennox, I hope you're right. I've buried seven children myself, and folks might think I'd be a pessimist, but I says it ain't no use for to give up hope until the very end. (*Cheerfully.*) That's my philosophy of life—don't give up hope until the end. And I tell you what, Mrs. Thompson, us mothers need all the philosophy of life we can get when our children are ailing, don't we?

MRS. THOMPSON. Oh, but Peggy's going to get well. (*Desperately.*) She must get well—she's all we have.

MRS. LENNOX (*anxiously*). There's nothing new that's wrong with Peggy, is there?

MRS. THOMPSON. No. Dr. Merritt had a specialist come from Chicago only last Tuesday to look her over, and he says there's nothing wrong with her organically. He says what she needs is building up and more outdoor exercise and more interest in things. He prescribed a special diet for her, but Peggy doesn't like milk or eggs, or cereal or bread, and when Miss Sims, the nurse, tries to get her to eat them, she cries. I don't know what we're going to do. The specialist laid such emphasis upon those particular foods, too.

MRS. LENNOX (*eagerly*). Perhaps if she'd get interested in the Child Welfare contests at the school—

MRS. THOMPSON. Yes, the specialist said something about that, too, but (*raising her hands*) don't talk Child Welfare to me. Not that I wouldn't be interested and do everything for it that I could if conditions were right for it here, but we have no slums, and surely you don't think that we aren't doing everything we can for Peggy. We have a trained nurse for her always, and we send for the doctor every time there's the least thing the matter with her—

MRS. CASEY. Well, I couldn't afford a trained nurse for my children, but I sent for the doctor every time they was going to die. (*She sighs heavily.*)

MRS. THOMPSON. Oh—

MRS. LENNOX. But you misunderstand, Mrs. Thompson. This Child Welfare movement concerns *every* child.

MRS. BLACK. Rich or poor, it doesn't matter.

MRS. THOMPSON. I can see it for the very poor, who live in the slums and are so very ignorant, but (*shaking her head and smiling*)—but not for my Peggy.

MRS. BLACK. But you say she lacks interest in things, and this might be just the thing needed to get her interested.

MRS. CASEY. Have you any children, Mrs. Black?

MRS. BLACK (*in a low voice*). No, I haven't.

MRS. CASEY. Well, then, that's probably why you think this Child Welfare is so good. But theory and practice is always different. After you've buried seven children the way I has, then you'll know what's good for them. And I agrees with Mrs. Thompson—this Child Welfare ain't for her Peggy.

MRS. LENNOX (*a little nettled at MRS. CASEY'S interruptions*). But I am a mother, too, Mrs. Casey, and I consider this Child Welfare good for my three children.

MRS. CASEY. Yes, but your children be healthy, Mrs. Lennox, and healthy children don't count. It's us as has the ailing ones what knows.

MRS. BLACK. But, Mrs. Casey, do you really know what Child Welfare is?

MRS. CASEY. Sure! It's weighing and measuring, and sending notes home to the mothers and telling her what to feed thin Katie and what to starve fat Paddie, and I say no teacher nor nurse got no right to interfere with home affairs. Let the teacher look after the writing and reading, and let mothers look after the feeding.

MRS. BLACK. But perhaps the teacher and nurse have made more of a study of the care of children than the mothers have had time to do.

MRS. CASEY. What! Can old maids know more about children than what the instinct of the mother tells her? Do you believe for one second any old maid nurse can tell me who has buried seven children how to take care of the blessed darlings?

MRS. THOMPSON (*hastily*). Oh, Mrs. Casey, we must admit that medical knowledge has increased wonderfully the last few years, and that it has shown that oftentimes the mother's instinct has done exactly the wrong thing for the child. I think I show by employing a trained nurse all the time and by calling in the doctor every little while that I trust more to science than I do to instinct.

MRS. CASEY (*changing front*). Oh, sure, sure, Mrs. Thompson. I was only arguing for the sake of arguing.

MRS. THOMPSON (*to MRS. LENNOX and MRS. BLACK*). And that's the point I was trying to make. I know that Mrs. Lennox is interested in every idea that is new and advanced, and I presume you are also, Mrs. Black. And I should be interested, too, in this Child Welfare movement if I thought it were needed, either in my own home or among our people. But surely you will agree that Peggy is as well taken care of as any child can be, and as for the mill people—well, with all the improvements—the hospital, the shower baths, the reading rooms, the social clubs and all that Mr. Thompson has tried to do for the men, I should hate very much to see them go outside the mill for the care of their children.

MRS. LENNOX. But, Mrs. Thompson, I am afraid you have been misinformed. The Child Welfare Movement is no more a charitable affair than the public school system is. Child Welfare aims to teach both the mothers and the children themselves how to look after the children's health, and I think the mill people understand this. I *know* that some of them want to bring their children to the Child Welfare meetings at the school.

MRS. THOMPSON (*bitterly*). Yes, I know they do, too. Why, one woman even came here yesterday afternoon—a Mrs. Stanika. She brought her little boy with her—he was as frail as my Peggy and my heart ached for her. He wouldn't eat the things he should have, either, and he had no interest in playing and he couldn't bear to have his mother out of his sight. She had lost a little girl a year ago, and she was afraid this boy was going the same way. And she wanted me to give her special permission to take him to the Child Welfare examinations at the school—she said she knew I was opposed to the mill women doing it. But of course I wouldn't let her. I don't think the mill people are quite that much in need of charity—and she cried. It was an awful ordeal for me. I sent her with a note to Dr. Merritt, asking him to do for her little boy as

though it were for Peggy. More than that I couldn't do.

MRS. CASEY. And enough I should think that was—and the nerve of a mill woman bothering you with her troubles, as if you ain't got none of your own!

MRS. THOMPSON. Well, I want them to look upon me as their friend, of course.

MRS. LENNOX. But, Mrs. Thompson, Child Welfare *isn't* a charitable institution, as I said before. *Rich* people are sponsoring the movement for their *own* children.

MRS. BLACK. Yes, rich women in Boston and New York and Chicago are sending their children to Child Welfare classes.

MRS. LENNOX. I understand your friend, Mrs. Strathmore, has been sending her little girl to Child Welfare classes now while she has been in Boston.

MRS. THOMPSON. Margaret Strathmore has sent Mary to Child Welfare classes! Why, Mary is as delicate as Peggy, and, if anything, Margaret has been even more careful of her than I have been of Peggy.

MRS. CASEY. Well, Mrs. Strathmore can be telling you herself now whether she has or no.

MRS. THOMPSON. Yes, she'll be back in two or three days now. But how did you know?

MRS. CASEY. Oh, ask me for news, if you want any. My friends say I know more than any newspaper as was ever printed. Then, maybe you'll be surprised to hear she's in town now?

MRS. THOMPSON. Mrs. Strathmore back!

MRS. CASEY. She come on the noon train. I seen her go by. She looked stunning as ever, and not so worried like, and she had a little girl with her, and she—the little girl, I mean—looked something like Mary, but again she didn't, for she was so big and strong.

ANNIE enters from the left, followed by MRS. STRATHMORE and MARY. MRS. STRATHMORE carries the handbag with the chart in it. MARY is a well behaved child who radiates health.

MRS. CASEY (*quickly*). Speaking of angels—

ANNIE. Mrs. Strathmore, ma'am. (*She withdraws lingeringly.*)

MRS. THOMPSON (*greeting MRS. STRATHMORE affectionately*). Margaret, this is a surprise! I thought you wouldn't be here for several days yet.

MRS. STRATHMORE (*smiling*). We surprised everybody, even daddy, didn't we, Mary?

MRS. THOMPSON. Why, is this Mary? Really! What has happened?

MARY. Oh, I've been getting well and strong!

MRS. STRATHMORE (*seeing the others and recognizing MRS. LENNOX and MRS. CASEY. She takes MRS. LENNOX's hand*). Oh, Mrs. Lennox, I am so glad to see you. I have so much to thank you for. (*To MRS. THOMPSON.*) It was Mrs. Lennox, Emily, who is the cause of the change in Mary. I was complaining to her one day how weak Mary was, and she told me what Child Welfare education did for children. I was skeptical, I'll confess—I thought it was some kind of charity doing—but when we went to Boston, Mary had a sick spell and the doctor we had also advised me to take her to a Child Welfare class that was organized there. I did—and you can see the result.

MRS. LENNOX. Oh, I'm so glad, Mrs. Strathmore. Then perhaps you'll help us in organizing the work here. But I don't believe you've met Mrs. Black. She's new here, but very much interested in Child Welfare.

MRS. STRATHMORE (*shaking hands*). I'm glad to hear that, Mrs. Black. (*To MRS. LENNOX.*) Really, are you organizing here at last? You certainly can count on me. (*To MRS. THOMPSON.*) You're taking an active part, aren't you, Emily?

MRS. LENNOX (*quickly*). Mrs. Thompson isn't quite convinced yet, but just as soon as she is, I know she'll be our strongest support.

MRS. THOMPSON (*falteringly*). I don't believe I've been seeing it in the right light.

MRS. STRATHMORE. Well, just look at Mary. Isn't that proof enough?

MARY (*holding up her arm to MRS. THOMPSON*). Just feel the muscle in my arm. Daddy was so surprised, and he says he's so proud he doesn't know what to do. But where's Peggy?

MRS. THOMPSON. She's in her room upstairs. She isn't feeling very well.

MRS. STRATHMORE. Oh, that's too bad. Another one of her spells?

MRS. THOMPSON. Yes, just like Mary used to have.

MARY. May I go up to her?

MISS SIMS, *the nurse, appears at the door.*

MRS. THOMPSON (*in alarm*). What is it, Miss Sims? There's nothing wrong with Peggy?

MISS SIMS (*smiling*). On the contrary, Peggy wants to know if she may come down here. She heard the voices and took a notion to see the people.

MRS. THOMPSON. Oh, I don't know. Isn't it too much excitement? What do you think?

MRS. STRATHMORE. Oh, let her come. It might be just the thing she needs.

MISS SIMS. I think myself it might do her good. She could sit in the arm chair over there.

MARY. Oh, do let her come.

MRS. THOMPSON. All right, then. (*MISS SIMS turns to go.*)

MARY. I'm going to run and meet her. (*She runs out after MISS SIMS.*)

MRS. THOMPSON. It's most unusual for Peggy to want to come where people are.

MRS. STRATHMORE. Mary was that way, too. Maybe Peggy's beginning to waken up. Because I think that's what she needs most—to get interested in things, and to want to be well herself.

MRS. THOMPSON. If Peggy could get as well as Mary, I'd try anything and do anything.

MRS. CASEY (*sententiously*). Well, you never can tell what'll start things, can you, Mrs. Lennox? (MRS. LENNOX *merely smiles in answer.*)

MISS SIMS and MARY *appear at the door supporting PEGGY between them. PEGGY appears very wan and white beside MARY.*

MRS. THOMPSON (*arranging the easy chair*). Here, Peggy, dear. Now are you comfortable? See all the ladies here. You know them all, don't you, except Mrs. Black, who is a new lady in town. And Mary, isn't she big and strong? Wouldn't you like to be like her so that you can run out and play with the other children?

(PEGGY *shyly nods her head up and down.*)

MARY (*earnestly*). You can be well like me *easy*, Peggy. All you need to do is to eat the right things, and sleep regular hours with all the windows wide open and take the right exercises. (*To MRS. STRATHMORE.*) Then she'll get a muscle just like me, mother, won't she? (*To PEGGY, who gets quite interested.*) Just feel it. Isn't it hard? Don't you want one like that in *both* arms, and surprise your daddy as I did mine? Oh, he was the most surprisedest daddy you ever saw.

PEGGY. Oh, mother, can I?

MRS. THOMPSON. Yes, dear, if you'll do what Mary did.

MARY. Where's my chart, mother? (*To PEGGY.*) I brought that over just to show you.

MRS. STRATHMORE (*smiling and drawing the folded chart from out of her handbag*). This is Mary's Child Welfare Chart. It's pretty nearly her dearest possession. (*To MARY.*) Explain it to Peggy and the ladies.

(*The women draw near, without obscuring PEGGY and MARY from the audience, and listen appreciatively while MARY unfolds the chart and explains.*)

MARY. This chart shows how much I should weigh for my age. All these little squares are marked off for the days and the pounds, and this red line shows how much I've lost or gained each day. You see how straight slant-

ing the red line is here—that shows for that week I didn't do anything wrong, and so I gained each day. There's a crook in it here—that day I ate too much candy and ice cream and so was sick—and I lost a whole half pound, wasn't it, mother? Then these three days we had company and I was so excited and wouldn't go to sleep like mother said, and then I lost this much. The other crooks you see are just teeny ones, for I didn't do things I shouldn't do for very long at one time. You see every week we gain or don't lose, we get a red star, and I wanted to have lots of red stars, so I was careful—and you see I got them. Oh, Peggy, you just ought to get a chart like this, and then you'll get well and strong—mother says I can go in swimming next summer—and—and it's lots of fun getting the stars.

PEGGY. Isn't it *hard* getting the stars, though?

MARY (*thoughtfully*). Yes, it is, sometimes. But then it gets easier after you get used to it.

PEGGY. Will I have to drink milk the way the doctor said?

MARY (*promptly*). Sure. (*Confidentially and oblivious of the older people.*) But you'll get so you like it. I used to hate it, too, but when I saw how the other children that wouldn't drink it didn't get stars, I made up my mind I'd like it, and now *I really do*. And you will, too.

PEGGY. Really, will I?

MARY (*decisively*). I'll bet you anything. And just feel that muscle again.

PEGGY (*looking up at her mother with eager eyes*). Oh, mother, may I have a chart right away?

MRS. THOMPSON. We'll see, dear. If they have any in town, we'll get one just as soon as we can.

MRS. LENNOX. They have them over at the school. In fact, they organized a class of a few children whose mothers were interested, only about two weeks ago. I didn't think of it before, but it's probably that class your mill woman wanted her little boy to join.

MRS. THOMPSON. And I didn't let her! Well, I'll get

all the mill women to join now, and all the women who I thought were too rich, too.

MARY (*to PEGGY*). But you know when you have a chart it's more fun if you join a class instead of doing it at home by yourself. (*To MRS. STRATHMORE.*) Mother, I may join here, too, mayn't I, and then I can look after Peggy? (*MRS. STRATHMORE smiles her assent.*)

MRS. CASEY. Now ain't she the darlint?

MRS. THOMPSON. Will you go with Mary to the class, dear?

PEGGY. Oh, yes. Tomorrow morning, mother?

MRS. THOMPSON. We'll see when they have it.

MRS. STRATHMORE. If you aren't convinced, Emily, you could go over to the class and see it first yourself.

MRS. THOMPSON (*quickly*). Anything that helped Mary that way convinces me.

MRS. LENNOX (*smiling*). Why not make absolutely sure right now? It must be just about closing time for the school. I know Miss Brown, the teacher in charge of the class in health training. Why not ask her to have the pupils stop in here and show what they look like? The school's only a block away, so it won't be any inconvenience for them. (*To MRS. THOMPSON.*) Unless you mind having them here?

MRS. THOMPSON (*cordially*). Oh, not at all!

PEGGY. Oh, yes, mother!

MARY (*clapping her hands*). And maybe they'll do their exercises or sing something!

MRS. LENNOX. All right, then, I'll telephone. It's in the hall, isn't it? (*She goes out.*)

MRS. CASEY. Well, now, who'd ever think that *science* could do more than a mother's *instinct*?

MRS. STRATHMORE. Yes, it's wonderful what medical study is able to do. Really there are mighty few children who need be sickly today—if only we grown-ups would realize it.

(*MRS. CASEY suddenly puts her handkerchief up to her eyes and starts to rock back and forth.*)

MRS. THOMPSON (*going to her and putting her arm across her shoulder*). Why, Mrs. Casey, what's the matter?

MRS. CASEY (*stopping her rocking and drying her eyes*). Oh, I know this ain't no time to be crying, but it just come over me all in a flash—maybe if I'd had more science and less instinct, I'd still had my seven children. (*She sighs deeply.*)

MRS. LENNOX (*returning*). I got Miss Brown right away and she's perfectly willing to come. I asked her to have the children bring their health charts with them, and they'll be here in less than five minutes.

ANNIE *appears from the right.*

ANNIE (*to* MRS. THOMPSON). It's that woman from the mill, ma'am—the one that was here yesterday. She's come again and says she must see you.

MRS. THOMPSON. Mrs. Stanika? Oh, I'm so glad. Tell her to come right in here.

ANNIE'S eyes seek MRS. LENNOX, who makes a slight nod, and ANNIE beckons happily toward the right exit, and MRS. STANIKA, holding JOSEPH tightly by the hand, comes in haltingly. ANNIE goes out slowly.

MRS. STANIKA. I ain't want to bother you again yet, Mis' Thompson, but it's Joseph. He cry all the time for some paper with red lines in school they have.

MARY. This? (*She holds up the chart.*)

(JOSEPH tugs yes at his mother's skirt.)

MRS. STANIKA (*her eyes lighting*). Ja, that's him! (*To* MRS. THOMPSON.) Please, Mis' Thompson.

MRS. THOMPSON (*winningly*). I've changed my mind since yesterday, Mrs. Stanika, and I find that the Child Welfare health classes are a good thing. So you can take your Joseph and I'll take my Peggy and all the mill women can take their children.

MRS. STANIKA (*hardly believing her ears*). I can take him! I can take him! (*Sinking down on the nearest chair, she folds JOSEPH convulsively to her.*) Oh, now my Joseph live! He no die like Marie—he live!

ANNIE *relieves the strain of the situation after a moment by appearing at the door.*

ANNIE. A lot of children, ma'am.

MRS. THOMPSON. We're expecting them. Show them right in.

The children come trooping in, followed by MISS BROWN. They have their charts rolled in their hands. For a moment they look around a little awkwardly. ANNIE stays in the room for the rest of the play.

MARY *(in a friendly tone)*. Oh, you have your charts. This is mine.

(The children unroll their charts and show them around. The women mix with the children and ask them questions in low tones. There is no restraint in this scene.)

FIRST GIRL *(to MARY)*. Oh, you've got lots of stars on yours!

MARY. Well, I've had mine longer than you've had yours.

FIRST GIRL. I'm going to get a star every week.

FIRST BOY. So'm I.

SECOND GIRL *(to PEGGY)*. Haven't you a chart?

PEGGY *(shyly)*. Not yet.

SECOND BOY. Oh, Miss Brown, Peggy hasn't a chart!

MISS BROWN. I have an extra one here for her.

PEGGY. Oh, thank you. *(A group crowd around to explain it.)*

THIRD GIRL. Oh, Miss Brown, this little boy hasn't any, either.

MISS BROWN. Here's one for him, too.

MRS. STANIKA. Oh, thanks, thanks.

THIRD BOY *(to MRS. CASEY)*. And when I get big, I'm going to be so big I can't go through the door.

FOURTH BOY. I'm going to be bigger than that—I'm going to be as big as the policeman on the corner *(or the best-known large man in town)*.

FOURTH GIRL *(to MRS. BLACK)*. I brush my teeth every day without mother telling me to.

FIFTH GIRL (*to* MRS. LENNOX). I go to bed at eight o'clock without crying any more.

SIXTH GIRL (*to* MRS. THOMPSON). And I eat cereal now, too.

MISS BROWN. Well, children, shall we show Peggy and Joseph our drill?

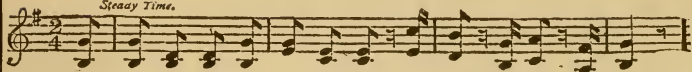
(The children quickly arrange themselves in the center of the stage for the drill. MRS. STANIKA, with JOSEPH standing beside her, has taken a seat at the extreme lower left of the stage, and PEGGY is in her arm chair at the extreme lower right, with MISS SIMS and MARY standing beside her. The other women are in the back. The children give all or part of the following drill or march and then sing "Ho, Ho, Child Welfare Days Are Here.")

MARY (*as soon as they have finished, calling across to JOSEPH*). Isn't it fun, Joseph?

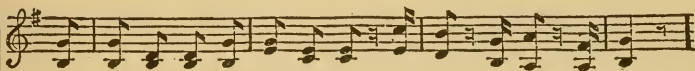
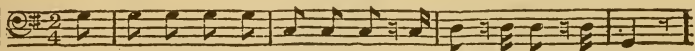
MRS. STANIKA (*in a prophetic voice, holding JOSEPH close to her*). It is LIFE!

CURTAIN.

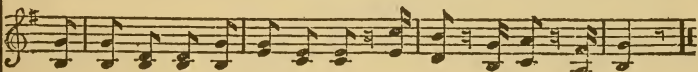
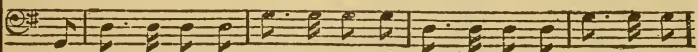
HO, HO, CHILD WELFARE DAYS ARE HERE.

Steady Time.

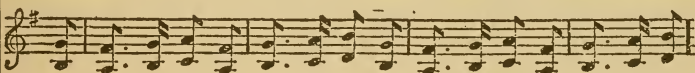
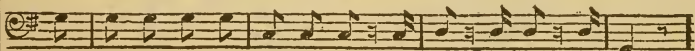
1. Ho, ho, Child Wel-fare days are here, Tra la, tra la, tra la!
2. Ho, ho, for milk and wholesome fruit, Tra la, tra la, tra la!
3. Ho, ho, to bed we now do go, Tra la, tra la, tra la!
4. Ho, ho, Child Wel-fare days are here, Tra la, tra la, tra la!



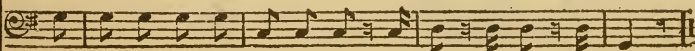
We wel-come them with right good cheer, Tra la, tra la, tra la!
 Have made us each a health re-cruit, Tra la, tra la, tra la!
 At eight, or half-past eight or so, Tra la, tra la, tra la!
 To make us strong-er ev-ry year, Tra la, tra la, tra la!



They teach us health to make our creed, And how from illness to be freed.
 Candy, cream-puffs, cakes and pies, Too much of these we now de-spise.
 Without a whimper, cry or tease, And night air never makes us sneeze.
 Each boy and girl they give a chance, No matter what his circumstance.



Ho, ho, Child Wel-fare days are here,	Tra la, tra la, tra la!
Ho, ho, for milk and wholesome fruit,	Tra la, tra la, tra la!
Ho, ho, to bed we now do go,	Tra la, tra la, tra la!
Ho, ho, Child Wel-fare days are here,	Tra la, tra la, tra la!



SUGGESTIONS FOR FANCY MARCHING.

I.—ON THE CURVE.

1. With a single file start from corner of stage, form a circle, then keep making smaller circles until the leader reaches the C. of stage, when all reverse and unwind in curves parallel to those made in winding, thus forming a



2. Starting from the back corner of stage, keeping quite close together, form a snake thus:



3. Starting from C. of side of stage, form a



Each one on the first half of the line stepping in front of the corresponding member on the last half of the line where the file crosses at C.

4. Starting in each case from the C. of stage, form the two following figures:

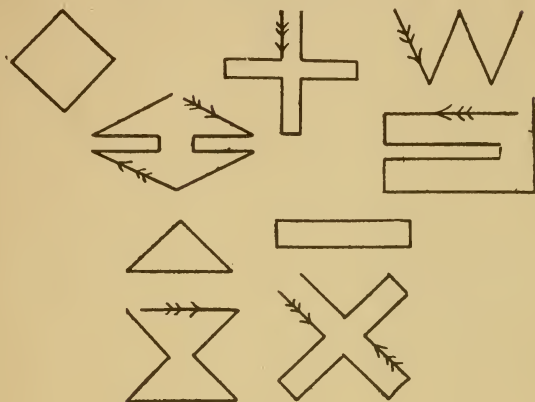


5. Starting from C. of back of stage, taking care to pass each other (as in No. 3) gracefully and without confusion where the line crosses in forming the loops, the file is led to form:



II.—STRAIGHT LINES.

Starting in each case at the back of the stage, from the center (or near it) or either R. or L. corner, as the illustration shows, form the following figures:



III.—DOUBLE FILE.

Starting in each case from the C. of back of stage the couples march as follows:



At C. of front of stage one couple turns to right, second to left, third to right, and so on; pass up sides of stage, and from the corners of back they form the following:



Couples meet at C. of back of stage, and forming fours march thus:



THE END.

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Honest Peggy, 25 min.	8	
Irish Linen Peddler, 40 min.	3	3
Just Like a Woman, 35 min.	3	3
Last Rehearsal, 25 min.	2	3
Men Not Wanted, 30 min.	8	
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